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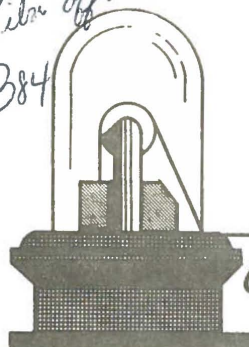
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Naval Postgraduate School

BUSINESS BAROMETER '71

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WHITE SMOCKS, TEST TUBES AND PEOPLE
(Human Skills Laboratory - Innovation in Education)

It would seem that the proper place for laboratory paraphernalia -- white smocks and test tubes -- is in and among the spacious corridors of the Naval Postgraduate School's Palace of Science - Spanagel Hall. Here, one is confronted with the Acoustics Lab, the General Physics Lab, the Petroleum Chemistry Lab, the EE Labs, the Ordinance Labs, ad infinitum.

No wonder, the surprise then, when the Department of Business and Economics recently announced the installation of a Lab of its own on the 5th deck of the East Wing of Herrmann Hall. This laboratory, unlike its counterparts across Engineer's Circle, has no microscopes, precision goniometers, spectrophotometers, vapor fractometers, or polarographs. In fact, its equipment is limited to a few sticks of furniture and the inquisitive intellects of its participants. It has been commissioned, "The Human Skills Laboratory."

Professor Melvin J. Steckler is the originator and faculty sponsor of the new lab. He states that, "The Human Skills Laboratory is an experimental one with the aim of testing the appropriateness of sensitivity training methods for management curriculum students. It has a further purpose of relating the intellectual resources and institutional methods of the Postgraduate School to the Human Relations Pilot Program established by the Chief of Naval Operations at Newport."

Readers will recall the announcement of the Newport pilot project in human relations published in the BAROMETER some time ago. Admiral Zumwalt has stated his objective in implementing the Newport program, "is to improve our understanding of and communications with people."

The development of sensitivity training, group dynamics, encounter groups, 'T' groups, self-analytic groups, etc., is not new, but remains controversial. Many American industrial concerns have utilized this type of training in their management and organizational development programs. Research is being conducted in it at many universities, for example, M.I.T., Boston University, Harvard Business School, University of Michigan, and Syracuse University, just to name a few.

The controversy usually stems from a misunderstanding of what the training is, what its purposes are, and the exaggerated expectations of its accomplishments. Certainly, the BUSINESS BAROMETER is not the vehicle to answer these questions in depth. However, we can point out that this type of lab training is a small group effort (ten students at NPS) designed to make its participants more aware of themselves and the group process, as these relate to organizational purposes. The group works under the guidance of a professionally trained behavioral scientist (Professor Steckler at NPS) and explores group processes and development through focusing attention on the experienced behavior of its members. While the common classroom structure is authoritarian and is focusing on man as a rational-cognitive being, laboratory training of this type takes man's emotional life (sentiments, attitudes and inner feelings) as well as his rationality and seeks to determine how these factors affect his relationships with others and his capacity for attaining a high degree of interpersonal competence.

The Human Skills Laboratory at the Postgraduate School will complement the effort at Newport as well as commence an important innovation as an integral part of the Management Curriculum at NPS. Dr. Steckler points out that during this initial quarter of operation the laboratory will have the following threefold purpose:

- A. To relate itself to the Newport Pilot Project through exchange visits and consultations.
- B. To research the literature for the background materials needed to support an effective training program.
- C. To experiment with developed techniques and approaches in the acquisition of the human skills of listening, counseling, influencing and participating in interpersonal and group situations.

The Committee on Innovative Methods of Instruction, recently recommended the awarding of a \$4,500.00 grant to fund the Human Skill's Laboratory's exchange visits to Newport. This would appear reflective of an increasing awareness of the need to probe for new techniques in managing what Admiral Zumwalt calls "our greatest resource - people."

PROFESSOR LANE'S GUEST LECTURE SERIES CONTINUE

One of the most popular series of luncheons at NPS has been made a continuing phenomenon this quarter. Professor H. Lane has extended his Visiting Speaker's Program to MN-3171, Resource Management for Defense.

To date the following speakers have presented their provocative subjects to Professor Lane's students:

Professor C.I. Wood, NMSC	"U. S. in the World Arena"
Professor R. von Pagenhardt, NMSC	"International Aspects of Defense Planning"
Professor L. Darbyshire, NPS	"A Civilian Looks at the Management of the Defense Department"
Professor J. E. Dawson, NMSC	"The World of Program Budgeting"

Future lectures are scheduled as follows:

5 February, Professor S. W. Blandin, NMSC	"Basic Logistic Considerations"
*19 February, Mr. C. Winson, Systems Regional Manager - G.A.O.	"Transportation"

(*TENTATIVE)

The luncheons take place on Friday from 1200 - 1400 hours in the La Novia Room. Space for this series is extremely limited, however those interested in the remaining two lectures should call 2041 for reservations.